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EXECUTIVE AND PERSONNEL  
**MANAGEMENT**  
ON THE  
NATIONAL FORESTS



A MEDIUM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND  
EXPERIENCES BY OPERATING EXECUTIVES  
FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE  
SERVICE

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## THE EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

by

ROY H. BLOOD, *Executive Assistant, Sierra Forest, Region 5*

Let us first establish the fact that the average salary for this position is in the neighborhood of \$2400.00, which represents an hourly rate of not less than \$1.00. From a description of the duties as set down in the National Forest Manual, we find that the man in this job must be able "to handle correspondence on SIMPLE matters with persons outside the Forest", that a part of his duties is: "the work of packing, unpacking, forwarding and receiving shipments of freight and express"; that he "shall relieve the Supervisor of clerical and routine work. . . handle routine matters with rangers under general supervision of Supervisor— etc." Throughout the entire discussion of the position, we find that "routine" plays a large part—Webster's definition of this word being, "any regular course of action adhered to through force of habit."

It has been the policy to select Executive Assistants from the clerical grades, the Supervisor making a statement in recommending the promotion that the man is capable of performing the duties as outlined in the National Forest Manual. It is doubtful if any Clerk who has been in the Service for any length of time would fail in these qualifications.

The most clean-cut and accurate picture of the job that I have seen is contained in the "Tentative Class Descriptions of National Forest Positions" which was wiled with the Personnel Classification Board during January of 1929. I quote this with minor alterations:

"Under direction of a Forest Supervisor on a National Forest having more than average volume and complexity of business, following general policies and plans laid down by superiors but with responsibility for developing details of procedure in executing such policies and plans, to relieve the Forest Supervisor of the performance or immediate supervision of all work carried on at National Forest headquarters; to give out information to visitors, negotiate with business concerns and users of the National Forest, and make decisions on various types of transactions; within the limits prescribed by existing law, to formulate and execute policies and plans for the purchase, requisitioning, distribution, storage, and care of supplies and equipment used in the work of the National Forest; to audit certain classes of accounts for payment by the Regional Fiscal Agent; to supervise the keeping of the financial records of the National Forest; to have immediate supervision over a group of from one to ten clerks and others engaged in various forms of office work and the receiving, storage, distribution, and salvage or reconditioning of supplies and equipment; to the extent required by the form of organization on the National Forest, to direct the action to be taken on fires; to be responsible for the keeping of general statistical records and the preparation of periodic or special statistical reports; to handle all correspondence which does not deal with final action in personnel cases or matters that involve a change in Forest policies; to be in charge of the National Forest headquarters during the absence of the Forest Supervisor; in all matters coming within the scope of his responsibility, to advise and direct District Rangers; and to perform related work as assigned."

The typical tasks set up for the position on pages 152, 153 and 154 are in keeping with the general requirements of the job.

To my mind, the same policy should be followed with an Executive Assistant as with any other member of the force, or with any piece of equipment; i. e., we should obtain the class of work for which the investment is made. It will be found in most cases that these men will thrive on the additional authority and responsibility to which they are entitled. If those Supervisors who have been handling all routine correspondence, all vouchers, all incoming mail, all orders to and discussion with field men, all contact with the public, etc., etc.,—if these men find the majority of these tasks taken over by the Executive Assistant and by him in turn assigned largely to the Clerks, it is possible that he will find time heavy on his hands, all of which may be well employed in public and personnel contacts, in inspections and planning, or in just THINKING.

It has been difficult, because of the general conception of the position, to put over the fact that the Executive Assistant position is clerical only in a Supervisory and advisory capacity. Yet, the Forest Supervisors of District Five, at a recent meeting in San Francisco, recommended that this man be a member of the specialized staff.

The failure of Executive Assistants to function up to their salary grade and probable ability has been partly due to the attitude of the Forest Supervisor. If the Executive Assistant is capable of properly handling the job assigned to him, then he is entitled to the entire confidence of the Supervisor, without which he cannot possibly function even though he be fully qualified. Because of the evident fact that the job was originally created as a means of bettering the salary status of the higher class Chief Clerks, a great many Supervisors still consider the position in that light, both in their selection of and attitude towards the man in that job. This resolves itself into the fact that we are either paying a Clerk at a rate considerably out of line with his value to the organization, or holding to clerical duties a man of excellent administrative ability. In either case, the Service is losing money all along the line because both the Executive Assistant and Supervisor are handling work below the standards for their positions.

Let us set up for discussion the following:

1. How much work is being handled by Supervisors that could be well taken care of by the Executive Assistant?
2. How much clerical detail is in the hands of the Executive Assistant that might be passed down the line?
3. Is your Executive Assistant in complete charge of the office organization and training?
4. Has he been given sufficient authority to enable him to secure the respect of the men and action on his direct requests, or is it necessary that the Supervisor step in to secure prompt action on reports, etc.?
5. Is the clerical end of the work so organized as to allow the Executive Assistant the greater part of his time on administrative work, or is he tied down to petty details to the exclusion of everything else?
6. Why not open this position to qualified field men who have had,



say two years' experience in administrative work? Training could be obtained each winter by men whom you may select.

7. Always bearing in mind that the Executive Assistant is possessed of the seven primitive senses, no matter how well developed, and that he is unquestionably willing and anxious to be one of the principal cogs of the machine, has he been given a chance to do his stuff or has he been set aside without consideration because he is a "Clerk?" If, through the method of selection for this job, your position is being filled by a man who has none but clerical possibilities, even he can be pepped up by additional responsibilities.

8. I think that a close study will determine that some Supervisors are handling work that might well be taken care of by Executive Assistants and that the Executive Assistant is doing considerable First Clerk work, and so on down the line. The question is whether this is through lack of ability, failure of Supervisor or Executive Assistant to properly assign the work, or insufficient Forest business to make it necessary that the highest efficiency be obtained. If the latter, then some excellent chances for training are being lost.

At any rate we have the position, for which we are paying good money—and we are constantly in need of office trained men with executive ability. Let each Supervisor make a frank analysis of the condition as it affects his own Forest with a view towards ascertaining whether or not he is getting value received—and if not, whether the fault is with the man, the Supervisor, the lack of administrative work required, or what not.

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## REVIEWS

*The Way Out for Your Business: Eleven Essentials of Successful Management Today* by W. J. Donald, Vice-President and Managing Director, American Management Association, published in Forbes Magazine, October 1, 1931.

This article is a follow-up of the one on "Wake Up, Business" reviewed in a previous number of our pamphlet. In this article Dr. Donald says that in order to stay in business during the next ten years all corporations, large and small, must "adopt, improve, and perfect certain management essentials."

1. *In Each Company, the Managing Group Must be Soundly Organized.* In most companies the executive organization is the result of hap-hazard growth. Additions have been made to the old structure as the work increased. What such companies need is a thorough analysis of executive jobs. This would determine the kind of work to be done in terms of decisions to be made and influences to be exercised. "The fourth step in sound executive organization is to promote within it a thorough understanding of the organization set up, of the organization relationships and of the organization theory back of it all." Organization theory is our weakest link. It will become a popular subject during the next decade.

2. *There Should be Universal Adoption of Budgeting.* To operate without a budget is unthinkable to the best executives, yet thousands are doing it. It is recognized as a good thing in general but the alibi "our

business is different" still prevails. Necessity will cause a big change in this attitude during the next few years.

3. *Incentives for Executives are Essential.* The discussion applies only to financial incentives. The trend is toward some form of bonus or profit sharing. This will require a better set-up of standards, but the tendency will grow. It compels better all round management than the salary system.

4. *Executives must Broaden...* "Of all the dangers which confront American business, the assumption that the executives of a business have arrived and that they need no further conscious development is probably the greatest." One of the greatest weaknesses is in the use of accounting data. A large part of the accountants effort is wasted because executives do not understand and use accounting reports. Executives also need training in personnel management, in training technique, in public relations, and in organization theory.

5. *Production, Buying, and Marketing Must be Unified into Merchandizing.* Producing executives should become more market conscious. Instead of trying to sell things that are made, make things for a definite market.

6. *Marketing Must be Drastically Improved.* Distribution is still in its infancy as compared to production. Research is the key to the answer. Marketing problems must be studied systematically just as production has in the past. Also markets must be studied.

7. *Production Costs Cannot Stand Still.* Costs will come down both in marketing and in production. Process engineering is in its infancy. But most of all economies will come from better supervision, better training and reorganization to eliminate overhead.

8. *The Financial Organization must be Modernized.* Financial Management has been given least study of all fundamental functions, yet its neglect is costly. Very few do a real good job.

9. *Look to Office Management for Large Economies.* Costs in the office have been neglected. The office should be on a factory production basis. Costs must be charged to executives who are responsible. The product must be studied. Unnecessary or unused products (reports, records, etc.) eliminated. Planning the flow of work is essential. A bonus system of compensation is desirable.

10. *Cost Systems Will test Executives.* There are too many cost reports that are mere inquests. The purpose of cost reports should be cost-saving. In the past costs have been used most in production—in the factory. Marketing costs are now being studied. In the future overhead will come in for cost accounting, not merely factory overhead either. Executives will in time be tested by this same tool which in the past they have used to test others.

11. *To Every Organization, the Outside Point of View is Vital.* This is much more important than most Companies realize. The tendencies are toward inbreeding and close-mindedness. Outside contacts are necessary. Outsiders on the board of directors help. The employment of outside consulting experts is another means of getting an outside point of view. Other helps are trade associations, meetings, publications; through comparing notes with others and utilizing every possible outside contact.



I wonder how many of these eleven essentials apply to us. My first reaction to that question is the old alibi that "our business is different." Since Donald says that these things are essential to staying in business, I hope the alibi is effective. But after all I would like to know just how we do rank on these items. I know we are away above average, but we do not want to be considered in the average class. Are we near the top?

As to number one, we discussed that last year. We learned enough of the theory of organization to know that ours is good but not good enough. Improvements are being made. It will stand further study, but still we rank well up.

Number three is out of our reach in so far as financial incentives are concerned.

Four is interesting to contemplate but not to discuss. I think we will get by. Besides, whose executives are doing better than ours?

Six is another essential that interests me. As far as our major product, wood, is concerned marketing will probably decline. More restrictions are more probable than fewer. But what of other products such as recreation? Will research study the marketing of this product as suggested in the article? Will it be developed systematically or will it just grow, topsy-like?

But number nine is the one I should like to see taken seriously by our executives. My hunch is that Donald's idea applies to us a hundred per cent. However, I do not know. No one will until it is systematically studied. Office management is one of the subjects suggested for discussion this winter. We have given one number to it, and it looks now like something was started that will get results.

Ten seems purely visionary to me. It might be a good thing but it will never be done.

Eleven, it seems to me, has been recognized as important at least. Donald says it is vital. Some of the methods suggested in the article are not open to us, but others are and I think we are using them. Do you agree? *Developing Executive Ability*: by Enoch Burton Gowin, Assistant Professor of Commerce, New York University.

My purpose is more to call your attention to the book than it is to give a comprehensive review of it. It is an excellent book both for the man who is trying to train himself and for one trying to help someone else. It is well written, easily understood, yet systematic and scientific in its treatment.

Gowin shows that success in executive work does not depend more on native ability than does success in other lines of work. Success anywhere depends largely on method-technique-and methods can be learned. Some men will learn more readily than others just as some will learn to use an axe more readily than others, but any man who has the ambition and the determination necessary to force himself to study and drill himself in methods of work and thought until they become habits, will in time become a successful executive.

Most of these techniques are not new to us: they involve the setting up of a definite goal with definite planned progress toward that end; they involve the analysis of all jobs to determine best and quickest ways of doing them; they involve the careful budgeting of time and the development of

proper work habits. Gowin's chapter on planning should be helpful to anyone who wants to improve his work.

But the executive who wants to be a success must do more than just work. He must develop also his social habits and his leisure habits. These things are as necessary as work. In fact work is a part of life not something apart from it. One should not think merely of making his social contacts and his play contribute to his work; he should also make his work contribute to them. Work and leisure should make up one harmonious whole. And of course, the executive must look after his health. It takes physical as well as mental energy to succeed even in the office.

Gowin's suggestions on training an assistant, (page 77 to 79) are very fine. His method does not involve the old idea of just throwing him in and letting him sink or swim; neither does it involve "frank criticism pointing out the good as well as the bad". Gowin would first talk over cases with the assistant, not as a lesson but just a man to man discussion of what the case involves and why certain things are done and the probable result of not doing them. Then when a case similar to one explained comes up he would say to his assistant, "We had a case like this last week did we not; how did we handle that?" The assistant would doubtless remember and explain how it was handled. Prompt him a bit by questions if needed. Then, "Suppose you handle this one along the same lines". The assistant will consult the file and do some real honest to goodness study of the case. He will then work up his own case. The chances are, however, that he will overlook some points. Now just here is an important step: don't point out to him what he has overlooked, make him find it himself. How? Usually by asking questions. "But how about Jones, will he know what you have done?" "No, he should have a copy of this. I'll make one for him". "And how about the damage, do we stand for that?" "I forgot that; I'll put in a claim for the cost." And so on until the learner has himself picked up all his mistakes and oversights. In doing this he is not learning just a method for handling one certain case; he is learning to *ask himself questions* and look at a case or problem from every possible angle before he makes his decision. In other words, he is learning to be an executive.

The book will be found in most Regional office libraries, and if not there it can be borrowed from the Department library in Washington. Possibly some of you would like to read it.

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Blood, in his article on the "Executive Assistant", has put up for us a strictly organization subject. To discuss it properly we should first review our last winter lessons on the principles of organization. What does organization mean, and what are we trying to do when we say that a certain class of jobs should be performed by a certain official?

We learned last year that organization was a systematic subdivision of the work to be done, but subdivided in such a way that, with the facilities available, the personnel available can do the best possible job with the least possible effort. That is the real problem when you are discussing the executive assistant. On the Forest there is work to be done. The super-



Supervisor cannot do it all, even though he is responsible for all, therefore he must delegate work to others. He has a man in his office called an executive assistant. For the best interests of the job—getting all the work done to standard—what should this man do?

To facilitate discussion, first disregard the manual statement of the duties of the position and consider only the work and the best way to get it done. After that is done you can then see whether or not there is conflict with the manual. Likewise consider the assistant capable of doing the work which the best organization would require him to do. Assistants not up to standard could be trained.

The real problem seems to hinge on whether or not the job should be clerical or executive. This would in turn depend on whether an analysis of the work in the office showed that the Supervisor need to delegate executive work. If the supervisor has time to do it all why delegate it? If he has not time, is it best to delegate it to field assistants who are coming and going or to one assistant who is always on the job, can learn the work and be responsible for it? Or is it better to let the office end of the work run itself, with first one man "acting" and then another and nobody responsible but the supervisor? In looking at this question consider only the good of the Service and try not to be influenced by habits or traditions. Forests differ in both amount and kind of work: likewise the best form of organization will differ. On all Forests there is work which the Supervisor should not delegate. If such work does not absorb all his time he will, of course, take on other work that might be delegated. Then too there are possibly office jobs that should be delegated to a field man—an assistant supervisor. After these are taken care of, does good management indicate that the remainder should be delegated to an office assistant or a field assistant?

After we have decided what is theoretically best we still have the practical question of deciding what can be done about it, remembering that we cannot just quit and start all over again.

The clerical work must be done; the vouchers must be written. The work must be balanced according to facilities. On most forests the Executive Assistant must do his part, and on some forests probably a considerable part of the clerical work. Blood thinks that in general these men can do a higher class of work; that if given more authority and more responsibility including more executive work they will be worth more to you and to the Service. If so, just what type of work should he handle?

This will depend to some extent on the man and on the forest. There are some jobs which naturally should be his and some that necessarily belong to the Supervisor. In between these two extremes comes a considerable volume of work that may be swung either way. Real expertness in organization and management is required in making the best possible division in this common zone.

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## QUESTIONS

1. Mr. Blood has set up eight questions for discussion which cover the problem but which I want to modify slightly. Suppose we combine his questions 1, 2, 4 and 5. As stated, they imply that executive assistants are



being misused. Can we not leave out that implication and discuss the question of how the Supervisor can make the best use of the position? This will, I believe, center the discussion around that class of work which I have designated as common ground between the Supervisor and his executive assistant. How can we determine the best division here or how to gradually shift the load until the best working balance is reached. Naturally a new man won't step right in to full capacity work in this field.

2. Next consider number 6 as given by Blood, with the added thought as to whether or not field experience should be required and if so how insure also the necessary clerical training and experience?

3. Accepting Blood's statement in number 7, that all clerks want to do a good job, (this applies to practically all men in all sorts of positions both in and out of the Service) and assuming that the job requires an executive (for part time at least) how best develop a chief clerk into an executive assistant? In considering this question, we can safely assume that every man wants the best training he can get and will work and study to that end. If this is discussed under 1, it need not be repeated.

*May I have your discussion by August 31?*

Executive assistants and clerks as well as supervisors are invited to discuss this lesson.

P. K.



## DISCUSSIONS OF LESSON 7

### *The Guard Training Camp*

When you see these discussions your first reaction will. I am afraid, be that "no man is a prophet in his home town"—not a single discussion from Region 6. The real reason for this I believe is that the discussion came at an unpropitious time. The region had planned a ten day training camp wherein methods of conducting a camp would be studied. Had our lessons come after that meeting, we would no doubt have gotten some good discussions, but no one wanted to hazard an opinion just before the camp. For training, like most things we do, has its techniques that can be learned.

However, we did get some good appreciative, worthwhile discussions that should be helpful next month when the job is on. Teaching is not a gift but a science, yet anyone by following the analytical method advocated in these discussions can do a fairly good job.

You will notice that I have not asked you to discuss what subjects should be taught. Conditions differ so widely that no program of subjects would do on all forests. Of course, there are a few subjects or jobs that are common to all—a fire is a fire and putting one out involves much the same procedure in all regions. But finding a fire is different. In parts of Region 6 a lot of emphasis is given to methods of finding a fire while in the southern part of Region 5, finding the fire, I am told, is not one of their problems. Firemen are now pretty generally lookouts also, so that on some Forests all guards are taught lookout work as well as fire chasing. However,

on some other forests guards are patrolmen and use cars. Why train them to use an alidade or a compass?

What we do agree on, however, is this: a guard should be taught to do the thing you expect him to do on the job. This may be simple or it may be complex but that is just what he should be taught. And it is not always so simple as it at first appears. If you are good on finding fires surely you can tell me how you do it. But a lot of men cannot. Telling how we do things that we have learned by long years of experience is the hardest thing in the world. For example, if you learned to use an axe the same year you learned to walk, try telling someone how you do it. Or if you are new in the country try asking an oldtimer the way to some place back in hills. Usually he tells you, "Just follow the trail straight over the hill; you can't miss it." But the trail does not go straight and you can miss it in a hundred places. The trouble is the native knows the trail so well that he forgets all the difficulties. Before attempting to teach any familiar job, however simple, you should make a careful analysis to determine just what you do.

Methods are changing rapidly these days but in general we all still "learn to do by doing" and prefer that method where it is practicable. The lecture is going out of style, but cannot be dispensed with entirely. The conference method is coming into use and is very effective for certain types of situations. It can be used only with experienced men since it presupposes that the information is in the group not the leader. Another thing that is developing rapidly, so rapidly that I can scarcely keep up with what is happening, is advance training for overhead jobs. This belongs with Carter's paper so we will get more information on that later. But in general for fire control training we must resort to the old formula "show him how, have him do it, and then test him to make sure that he knows." We are taking a big chance when we depend on uninstructed and untested help.

P. K.

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J. E. RYAN, K. A. KLEHM

KANIKSU

NEWPORT, WASHINGTON

1. The location of the training camp should be as close to a lookout point as possible in order to get the conditions under which the trainee has to perform his work. The training itself from locating the smoke, finding the fire and putting it out should be as near to actual working conditions as possible to obtain.

The fire control training course of a few years ago served two purposes, a sieve to get rid of those undesirable for the job and training others in the essentials of the job. Under present conditions, the men have gone through the sieve in working on other forest work before being picked for fire control jobs. Therefore with such men as trainees, the camp layout should be the best possible for giving the necessary fundamentals in fire control training in the time allotted, namely three days.

The layout should consist of the ranger in whose district the meet is held in charge. Thirty-five men should be the maximum number in one training camp. Each man should have the standard fireman's pack which gives him all equipment necessary for the work. The school should be ar-



ranged in groups of 5 to 8 with an instructor in charge of each group, who should carry on the instructions of the group through all subjects. This gives the trainer a chance to check up on each individual and give additional help where needed. Further, the trainees will be more inclined to ask for help from one than from a number.

All work necessary for carrying on the training that is not part of the actual training itself should be performed previous to the meet in order that every minute be used to advantage for accomplishing the fire control end.

2. It is all right to make the course interesting and attractive, but not to such an extent that the true importance of the job is overlooked. As mentioned before, actual conditions should exist as close as possible in order that the trainee will realize and know what is expected of him.

3. (1) (2) With proven men from other forest work such as trail, brush, and road crews chosen for fire control jobs, we doubt whether this will be necessary. However, in order to let the men know the importance of why they are being trained, the importance of their position should be stressed mentioning that if they cannot qualify, other men will have to take their place. The importance of their individual positions should be mentioned at the outset but not "harped" on throughout the whole training course.

(3) (4) We are not in favor of this. It would arouse too much competition and result in some of the essentials being overlooked and forgotten. The atmosphere of the camp should be for fairness to both trainees as well as trainers. Competition is a human trait where more than one person is involved.

The best man does not always show up in a course such as this, while the reverse is sometimes true.

(5) We agree with Mr. Kuhns.

(6) Do not agree. Should give the trainees the program a few days before the course is given in order that some study might be done if so possible to do.

(7) Would change extreme to very rare cases. The ridicule of the individual might tend to detract others instead of making them more keen.

4. The whole course should be demonstration, actual practice, more demonstration and practice. It takes as much time to demonstrate bad points as good so leave out the bad and have all good.

5. Answered under No. 1.

6. The fire plan should be gone into some at the start of the course, to give the men their position in the plan and again reiterated at the completion of the course.

7. The best way to put across an idea is by doing, so the time for trainees to listen at any one time should not be great.

8. Details are necessary on any job if we are to know how to accomplish it to a high degree. The point is to cut out all unnecessary details that do not pay dividends.

Most of the administrative studies discussed are changes in policies which means action by the Forester and Regional Forester's Office. It is



believed that such action will be taken when proven ways are obtained for betterment over existing policies.

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ANDREW HUTTON, EDW. WRIGHT

SAN JUAN

DURANGO, COLO.

It seems to us that Kuhn's brief description as to how he trains guards indicates clearly that his methods are scientific. They should get results, and probably do. There are a few things mentioned, however, with which we can not agree and these are discussed later.

"Morale" certainly is important. It means spirit, hope, or confidence, according to the dictionary. It consists of maintaining the proper mental attitude of each employee to every other employee and to the work in general. It is true that morale, altho important, is not the only thing needed. Men may have morale, but if they lack necessary training they fail. No doubt there are many things to be taught at every training camp, and this can best be done by actual practice and experience. First tell the trainees "how" through lectures and then make them do it to determine if they really know.

## QUESTIONS

1. We have no criticisms or suggestions to offer on the general plan of the camp, etc. The brief discussion given by Kuhns indicates that he has this phase well in hand.

2. The course must be "interesting and attractive"; otherwise the first principle of training has failed. Kuhns apparently does this through incentives. In our opinion, that is the only way it can be done.

3. We agree with Kuhns first four "incentives". The fifth we do not agree with entirely. Some of the "new" men rather than "old timers" may be more capable of demonstrating methods, because of their past experience, education and training. Men who simply display a know it all attitude may not necessarily be good demonstrators or teachers. We can't entirely agree with his surprise methods and we do not believe that the fact that the men don't know in advance what to expect next will necessarily create interest and attractiveness unless the "surprise" is agreeable. Every man has certain preferences. If the surprise is to his liking he will be interested and attentive, otherwise he will not and in a group such as they must have at such a camp every "surprise" certainly can't be a pleasant one to every man. We believe that the element of surprise should be used with discretion. The seventh incentive is o. k. if used, as Kuhns says, with discretion. But many men do not take kindly to the idea of being made ridiculous before a group, and the idea, if not carefully used, might very easily "gum the works".

4. The procedure for "classroom" work looks good. By instruction, demonstrations, actual practice and discussion the principles of good teaching are being followed.

5. Dennison's idea that a man may be too close to the job to be a good instructor is a good one, because he doesn't see it from the beginners' viewpoint; however, the instructor must know his job in order to teach. The mere fact that he knows it does not mean, however, that he can teach. We believe that often we are all apt to criticize a new man too much at times

for his failure to grasp an idea or because he makes a mistake on account of our failure to recognize that he has had little or no experience and that he is just learning. Quite often also, as stated in the question, the teacher blames the trainee, when in fact he is to blame for not properly putting the ideas across.

6. "Explanation of the Forest Fire Plan" in a protective guard or smoke-chasers fire camp should in our opinion come at the beginning and not at the end of the course. We should give the trainees some definite ideas as to what we are trying to do or, in other words, give him our objectives before we try to teach him how we are attempting to attain them.

7. "Seldom necessary for the Trainees to listen more than an hour at a stretch" is a good idea. Lengthy lectures are usually tiresome at best, and in a three day period knowledge gained through actual practice rather than knowledge through lectures is advisable.

8. We always need to get down to details in training new men. If they don't get the details they don't get much.

The training of employees for jobs has not progressed as rapidly as business has. However, systems for training employees have improved considerable during the past 20 years. The Forest Service compares very favorably with private business organizations as a whole in the progress made to train employees.

The discussion of administrative problems certainly indicates clearly that we need a great deal and that we can only get them by systematic administrative study. Many such studies need to be definitely planned for and undertaken immediately. They will never be solved until someone is detailed in the first place to summarize what we need and separate that from what we would "like to have", and then issuing the necessary instructions to see that we get what we need. Then we must all put our shoulders to the wheel and get it. We can't hope to solve administrative problems or to make administrative studies systematically if we leave the matter as it now stands. Someone must correlate the various needs as brought out in the discussions and require that they be systematically solved.

While the discussions have not definitely settled arguments for or against certain ways to solve problems, they have indicated what is needed and have offered an excellent opportunity for the crystallization of thought.

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J. C. URQUHART

MISSOULA, MONTANA

Kuhn's paper bears out his opening statement to the effect that he has had a lot of experience in guard training work. The more experience a man has the simpler his outline for training becomes.

1. The organization should consist of a member of the Supervisor's staff who is experienced in guard training work and enough rangers or alternates to provide one instructor for every five men. It isn't possible to produce a finished forest guard by three days training. Obviously then, we must do a lot of "training on the job". Since the district ranger will do most of that the opportunity that a guard school presents for "training the trainers" is probably about as important as the training of guards. The layout and equipment needed depends to a great extent upon what subjects



you expect to teach and these should be very closely tied to the particular job which the men have to do. On the Selway and some of the other inaccessible forests in this region about 98 per cent of the fires are caused by lightning. Contact by guards with the public is negligible. The big job is to discover, accurately locate, find and put out lightning fires. Most fires are extinguished by men who "hike" to them an average distance of 5.7 miles and carry a 35 pound fire outfit on their backs. My training program has included only the steps necessary to the discovery, accurate location, reaching and suppressing small fires.

2. The course must be interesting and attractive. Clear-cut statements and a display of "pep" on the part of instructors is a help. Stories concerning feats or experiences of smokechasers tied in to various parts of the course are a help in proportion to the ability of instructors to use them. Lining men up with the understanding that their job depends to a great extent upon their showing made at the guard school also helps. After using the best men to fill guard vacancies the others are assigned to improvement crews or dropped as seems best. Let it be known that a test on the last day will surely result disastrously unless all subjects are well learned and then send them to a hypothetical or real fire, if conditions permit, which will bear out your statements. See that the men who fail alone are taken to the fire by someone and their errors pointed out. Occasionally a green man with a lot of potential ability becomes confused and goes wrong.

4. The a to g instruction procedure outlined by Kuhn is practical.

5. Undoubtedly instructors need training but I do not profess to know what methods are best. Many men learn quickly just by practice. They find which methods will work and which will not. If placed with a highly skilled man they will usually learn a lot by observation. A liberal discussion of methods each evening is a help. Since rangers do a large amount of on the job training I like for them to take one squad thru every subject. Success in guard training depends to a great extent upon ones ability to size up men and adapt methods to individual needs. When dealing with the cowpuncher or lumber jack type, time spent explaining "why" is usually wasted. Just the reverse is true with students. The student type will leave the ranch hand and woodsman behind on map work but when it comes to putting out a fire the woodsman's knowledge of the use of tools turns the tables.

I don't take much stock in the idea that a man may be too close to the job to be a good instructor, that is, if he's close to the subject and equally close to the class of men he has to teach. Thorough knowledge of a subject should enable a man to explain it in the simplest terms, but if he isn't familiar with the different trends of thought of different types of men and can't put strangers at ease by his manner and by calling them by their first names the first time he sees them he probably wouldn't have much luck.

6. The explanation of the Forest Fire Plan should come after supper at the time of the rangers first visit to the guard because, from a priority stand point, it isn't entitled to consideration sooner. By that time the guard may have assimilated a lot of the other stuff and should be in a better condition to absorb something new. Don't spring too much that's new at one time on this class of men. I "Chased Smoke" three years and put out a lot



of fires and I don't know yet whether the Clearwater had a fire plan at that time nor can I see where it would have made any difference as far as the results were concerned. Of course, it would have been "nice to know."

7. An hour is about 40 minutes too long for the average trainee to listen with profit. Break up the lectures with demonstrations and actual practice.

8. Yes, I believe that some discussions of details is worth while otherwise I would have left out several of the things I have included.

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A. F. HOFFMAN

MONTEZUMA

MANCOS, COLORADO

The discussion on "Training Methods For Guard Training Camps", seems to one who has never had experience with such work, to be complete and instructive. Perhaps some of us would want to change some of the methods if we conducted such a camp, because we found that a change was desirable. The interest of the trainees must be maintained and the manner of conducting the camp will have to do that. I question the value of some of the incentives that are stated in the discussion, but I agree that there must be incentives. I think that the "a" to "g" instruction procedure is good. To this should be added a sort of "final" examination.

I believe that it is now generally accepted that each instructor or trainer must vary his methods, that is, some trainees must be taught in one way and some in others. The responsibility of the trainer does not end with the finishing of doing the training job according to an established outline, but he must see to it that each trainee is taught, which means that each is handled according to the method that will best get the ideas across. Each trainee must be studied, a specific system of training for him laid out, and then the particular system must be followed out.

The "Explanation of the Forest Fire Plan" should come at the beginning, at the end, and in the middle of the course and referred to at other times. This is because the training is being done so that the provisions of that plan will be properly carried out, so it should be made certain that the trainees understand it.

Judging by the discussions of administrative studies, there seems to be considerable difference of opinion about the need for changes in our system and also about whether we can bring about changes that seem to be needed. I believe that the Washington office should decide what should be done about these things and if it decides that changes should be made, it should so order.

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RALPH S. SPACE

BLACKFEET

KALISPELL, MONTANA

1. I agree with Mr. Kuhns in his system of organizing the classes. However, I disagree with some of his methods and subjects taught.

Lectures don't go over very well to a bunch of guards. Demonstration is a far better method and should replace telling and lecturing as much as possible. Any lecture or talk that extends over ten minutes is apt to fall flat.

In the matter of training guards how to organize crews for fighting

larger fires, aren't we going beyond anything we will require most of them to do? Very few of our guards act as fire foremen or strawbosses, and while I believe in training these men for this purpose, I think we should pick over our guards and give training in this subject to special men. Time is the element that I am considering in eliminating this subject.

2. I believe the training would be more interesting if there was less competition in the course. Competition is all right as long as the men are on an equal basis. Competition is just like a game. If you think you have a chance of winning you will work hard but if you do not believe you have a chance you won't try nearly so hard. In this instance the first year guards have little or no chance of winning the raise in salary when competing with men of from one year's experience up. It has been my experience that men will naturally start competing to see who can find their fires first, who will run his compass line first, etc. These men get to competing in twos and threes and usually group in accordance with their previous experience. No prize should be offered unless this competition can be made on an equal basis and I see no method of doing so.

The course is made interesting by suspense. The idea that something like a night fire finding contest at the end of the course that is hinted at during the course keeps everyone interested. The course inspires confidence in the men provided they find the fires, and if they do not find them the reverse is true. I am wondering if it is worth while to make the fire extremely difficult to find. Make it hard enough to make a test but not so hard as to cause numerous failures and consequent loss in confidence.

I question the policy of making a statement at the beginning of the course that all deadwood will be eliminated. Most men know this and a statement to this effect only makes men distrust you and lose confidence. If there is something that they do not know they will try and conceal it rather than try to learn. It has always been my plan to tell men at the starting of the course the objects of the training. That the course is in no way a test of their abilities but given with the purpose of teaching them what they should know. That if any point comes up that they do not understand, not to let it pass but find out by questions at once.

3. I would suggest that some form of recreation be included in the lineup. After working hours some form of entertainment should be provided. A grade school instructor once told me that the main thing in starting a youngster in school is to get him to go because he likes it and the way to make him like it is to provide games, etc. that would provide fun enough to be an attraction. The same is true to a lesser extent among men. Provide enough entertainment in the way of games, etc. to make the men like it.

As I have previously stated, I believe No. 1 should be eliminated and substituted with an explanation of the purpose of guard school and try to gain their confidence and interest.

4. The instruction procedure is good, emphasis should be placed on demonstration and practice. Lectures should be cut to a minimum.

5. We should give the trainers some form of training on teaching methods. Just because a man knows a subject is no reason why he can



teach. I have known men who knew a subject well but could not explain it to anyone. Some form of training would probably teach him how to put across what he knew.

Untrained trainers are apt to blame the student for not trying, or of being unable to learn rather than blame their methods of teaching.

6. Explanation of the forest fire plan should be eliminated from the guard training plan. The Forest Fire Plans have now become so complicated that an attempt to explain them would fall flat. An explanation of the organization from Supervisor's office down would be of more value.

8. In giving a training course we should go into detail in everything that the guard will have to do, but leave out all non-essentials. As an illustration, we should go into detail in explaining and demonstrating how to run a compass line, how to hold the compass, how far to sight, etc. There should, however, be no effort to explain why there is a weight on the south end of the needle.

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C. R. TOWNE

ROUTT

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLO.

Mr. Kuhns's paper opens a big field for discussion. All methods of training and teaching do. A lot has been said in previous lessons about the field not functioning properly unless the office is functioning properly. I wonder if the opposite is not true? If that is so Kuhns is surely on the right track in putting across the training program outlined. The time set up or three days, is short for teaching a thorough knowledge of fire protection, especially when local Forest Officers are used for instructor. The organization, it seems to me, could be made more effective if instructors, specializing on fire problems could be brought in to do the lecture work. I am not in any way belittling the work or ability of the ranger, we all know that few of us can really put across what we know on a subject so others can really get something out of it. Permanent retention on any subject is the true goal of all good teaching and to get permanent retention you must secure and hold the listeners interest. To hold interest the instructor must; first, have carefully selected subject matter; second, arouse a feeling for the need of the subject matter given; third, show intense interest in the subject he is teaching and know his subject; fourth, teach only the essentials needed at this time. Can the average forest officer do this? I do not believe he can, especially with the time he has to prepare the work and the time to put it across.. Teaching is a gift that few of us have. The untrained instructor cannot see the job from the beginners point of view and consequently when the trainee goes out to do the job he may fail. He has been told how to do the job but he has never been shown how to do it. It is the tendency of the most of us to criticise in cases of this kind rather than to say, "well he has not had the proper training."

The fire plan should come the first thing and should be referred to frequently throughout the entire meeting so that the trainee will become acquainted with it before he is called upon to go to the fire which comes up the last day of the camp.

The instruction procedure is more or less of a guide to follow and is necessary. Lectures to a group of this kind are usually not received as en-



thusiastically as practical demonstrations and should be held down as much as possible. Instruction by demonstration, individual test, group tests, and competition, if properly supervised and directed will be retained longer than if heard in a lecture. With the short time available for this camp it is necessary to teach only the details.

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HUBER C. HILTON

MEDICINE BOW

LARAMIE, WYOMING

Personally I prefer the approach to training work outlined by Vetter, as compared to that given by Kuhn, because it seems to analyze the training job more fully and determines more closely just what the individual needs. Whether it is necessary to go into such detail would depend I believe on the purpose of the work, type of men involved, and other factors particularly applicable to the Forest or locality. Whether the training to be done involves a large group on specialized work, such as fire guards, or just a few men, as for instance, trail foremen in trail construction, the same principles should apply. The analysis should be made on the basis of "what he does." If this is determined, then the methods to be used, whether "doing the job," "demonstration," or "lecture" can be determined. Just simply to start out to train a group without prior analysis will not work and is largely if not entirely a waste of time.

My personal idea is that the men being trained should do as much of the work themselves as possible even though they make mistakes. Lectures have a limited value but at best it is hard to command attention, especially of men who are used to and enjoy outdoor work. They should be made to realize, however, that only work done to the standards demonstrated will be accepted because if work below standard is accepted for one line of work or one job this encourages slovenliness in all lines of work.

I certainly believe that even for a two or three day training camp we need to get down to details—to analyze what the trainee is to do during the course of his employment—to determine by just what steps and methods he is to be trained for each job—to determine what is to be done by trainees when not "on demonstration," particularly to provide for recreation and amusement that trainees do not go "stale" on the job.

